

ABSTRACT

A method for performing a file transfer in a peer-to-peer environment enables transfers with controlled anonymity. According to this method, a file is received from a user via a third party along with a content rating from the user. Along with the file, an alias is received identifying the user. Identity information about the user is stored in the third party in association with the alias. The user can select one or more information elements within the identity information that can be sent along with the alias. Amongst which can be included as the information elements are one or more of the following: an email address, a name, a mailing address, a telephone number, a social security number, a bank account number, a credit card number, an age, a birth date, income information, employment information, purchasing preference information, and an education history. Any content rating are aggregated with other content rankings from other users and identified with the alias. The third party can then act as an intermediary between the user and other users to protect the privacy of the user and to enable financial transactions to occur between the user and another user or company. One or more of these elements 51-56 can be performed together to create various useful methods for transferring files and other information between users and others.